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ABSTRACT

This is an in-depth analysis of eight elementary schools, six of which were characterized by improving student achievement and two of which were declining in student achievement. Data were collected through questionnaires and personal interviews. Ten major findings and 10 recommendations for improvement of student achievement are discussed, along with a detailed presentation of relevant data. The most pervasive finding concerned teachers' and principals' attitudes toward student achievement. The staff in the declining schools had low opinions of their students' abilities, while the staff in the improving schools had high opinions of student ability. (Authors)

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CHANGES IN SCHOOL CHARACTERISTICS COINCIDENT WITH CHANGES IN STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

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Abstract

This is an in-depth analysis of eight elementary schools, six of which were characterized by improving student achievement and two of which were declining in student achievement. Data were collected through questionnaires and personal interviews. Ten major findings and 10 recommendations for improvement of student achievement are discussed, along with a detailed presentation of relevant data. The most pervasive finding was the one concerning teachers' and principals' attitudes toward student achievement. The staff in the declining schools had low opinions of their students' abilities, while the staff in the improving schools had high opinions of student abilities.

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Changes in School Characteristics Coincident with Changes in Student Achievement[1]

Wilbur B. Brookover and Lawrence W. Lezotte[2]

BACKGROUND

Since the establishment of the Michigan Educational Assessment Program (MEAP) eight years ago, annual tests have been given to all public school fourth- and seventh-grade students in Michigan in the content areas of reading and math. The MEAP provides building level summaries of the students' performance on these tests. The MEAP tests have undergone a number of revisions of one sort or another, especially during the first three years of the program. However, during the past three years the format of the test, the objectives being assessed, and the types of items utilized in each grade and content area have remained constant. As a result, the building level test results for the past three years provide an "overtime" perspective on the building level achievement for fourth- and seventh-grade students in every Michigan public school.

This research project derives from the fact that the building level assessment scores, in some schools, had evidenced a steady improvement and others a steady decline over the past three years. The study was designed to address the general question: *What changes*

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[1] This project was carried out at the College of Urban Development, Michigan State University under a contract with the Michigan Department of Education.

[2] Wilbur Brookover is a professor of urban and metropolitan studies, sociology, and secondary education and curriculum. Lawrence Lezotte is a professor of educational psychology and coordinator of the IRT's Communication and Dissemination Unit.

occurred in the "improving" or "declining" schools that coincided with the changes in measured achievement?

Since the same students are not tested each year, it seems unlikely that the observed changes were a reflection of the unique characteristics of a cohort of students. The more plausible assumptions are that in some way, (1) the operation of the schools had changed, or (2) the type of student clientele had changed substantially. Support for the assumption that operation had changed in the "improving" and "declining" schools was found in the fact that the majority of school level achievement scores had either not changed appreciably or patterns of changes were irregular from one year to the next.

The second assumption, that the building level changes reflected changes in student clientele being served, was considered. After an examination of relevant Michigan Department of Education data, researchers concluded that some of the changes in schools may indeed be reflections of changes in the student body composition, *but not all.* Therefore, researchers proposed to examine a selected sample of those elementary schools in which no apparent shifts in the student body composition had occurred, yet substantial shifts in measured pupil performance were apparent.

This research project represents a logical extension of several earlier research efforts. Two specific projects are particularly relevant to the study:

1. "Report of the 1974-75 Michigan Cost Effectiveness Study"
2. Schools Can Make a Difference: As Indicated by a Study of Elementary School Social Systems and School Outcomes, (Brookover,

Without going into detail, it is sufficient to note that the "Cost Effectiveness Study" examined a range of variables which were believed to be reflective of differences in compensatory education schools which were relatively effective or ineffective. The findings of the study report that the ineffective and effective schools did differ significantly on the many institutional and contextual variables examined.

Independent of the Michigan Department of Education (MDE), Brookover et al. completed the NIE-sponsored study, "Schools Can Make a Difference." They examined a range of social structure and school climate variables. The study included a random sample of Michigan elementary schools. Like the MDE study, Brookover et al. found that several school climate and social structure variables accounted for much of the variance in building level achievement. Though conducted independently, both studies were concerned with similar variables and found them to be most highly correlated with building level achievement scores. In addition, both studies began with schools that evidenced *natural variation* in measured achievement. Both studies share a limitation which the current study attempts to address, at least in part.

The earlier studies made no attempt to determine whether the predictor or criterion variables had recently undergone any noticeable change. The current study begins with recent and apparent change in the achievement dimension and asks whether concomitant structure or climate changes either preceeded or paralleled the achievement changes. This variation in design and focus is significant because it increases understanding of the relationship which is already known to exist between social structure, school climate variables, and measured school achievement. Needless to say, the current research study must stop short of making causal inferences. However, if evidence is found to support the contention that changes in achievement coincide with changes in structure and climate, researchers will have moved much closer to describing causality.

The purpose of this study was to determine what, if any, school social structure, climate, programatic, or personnel changes coincided with the consistent patterns of improvement or decline in achievement that occurred in selected Michigan elementary schools.

This study did *not* include schools in which achievement change occurred concomitant with changes in the characteristics of the student body.

RESEARCH DESIGN

Site Selection

We studied eight Michigan elementary schools. Several steps were utilized in selecting the eight school sites. The initial steps included defining change and classifying schools in terms of their initial relative standing on the MEAP tests. We arrived at the following two school classifications:

1. High Need: Less than 50% of the fourth-grade students tested attained 75% or more of the objectives on the 1974 test.
2. Low Need: 50% or more of the fourth-grade students tested attained 75% or more of the objectives on the 1974 MEAP test.

We used these classifications in our final cite selection to insure that, relative to initial standing, a range of schools evidencing change would be included. In the eight schools finally selected, five schools were high need and three schools were low need.

The definition of changing schools included two categories of change: "improving" and "declining." The operational definitions used were:

Improving Schools: A school was defined as improving if it showed an increase of 5% or more in the percentage of students attaining at least 75% of the tested objectives *and* a simultaneous decrease of 5% or more in the percentage attaining less than 25% of the tested objectives between 1974 and 1976.

Declining Schools: A school was defined as declining if it showed a decrease of 5% or more in the percentage of students attaining at least 75% of the tested objectives *and* a simultaneous increase of 5% or more in the percentage of students attaining less than 25% of the tested objectives between 1974 and 1976.

The final selection of sites included six improving schools and two declining schools. The eight school sites selected for the study were distributed as follows:

	Improving	Declining	Totals
High Need	5	0	5
Low Need	1	2	3
Total	6	2	8

The eight sites selected represented a range of community types (rural to urban) as well as various racial-ethnic and socio-economic student compositions. Table 1 includes descriptive data on each of the eight sites. Sites A and B were the two declining sites and sites C through H were the improving sites.

Data Collection Procedures

Our principal investigators made the necessary arrangements to visit the eight schools. The school superintendents, building principals, and, in some cases, local teachers' organization representatives were informed

Table 1: Descriptive Data for Study Sites

Site	Percentage of Students in Lower & Upper Quartile MEAP 1974-1976					Number of Students Tested 1976	Percentage of Title 1 Eligible Students	Percentage of Minority Students 1976	Number of Comp. Ed. Students Served[1]		Teachers' Average Years in School[4]	Principal's Years in School	Community Type
	Year	Math L	Math U	Rdg. L	Rdg. U				Title I[2]	Chap. 3[3]			
A	1976	5	64	39	45	56	17	1	--	31	9	2	Rural
	1975	0	74	29	39								
	1974	0	85	15	51								
B	1976	11	50	48	26	46	30	30	60	--	7	6	Small Town
	1975	2	60	44	24								
	1974	4	73	37	31								
C	1976	0	97	2	76	37	--	25	--	39	5	7	Urban
	1975	0	93	0	77								
	1974	0	80	11	53								
D	1976	4	32	56	12	25	59	97	157	169	5	1	Urban
	1975	7	41	67	7								
	1974	22	22	70	5								
E	1976	0	62	24	38	37	42	18	100	98	9	1	Urban
	1975	2	69	27	36								
	1974	16	37	39	25								
F	1976	9	51	34	29	35	51	87	69	158	13	3	Small City
	1975	12	30	49	19								
	1974	22	31	64	15								
G	1976	0	80	15	53	54	17	40	20	100	6	7	Suburban
	1975	6	62	38	40								
	1974	16	41	49	27								
H	1976	10	43	36	24	70	21	100	107	187	6	10	Urban
	1975	13	46	51	14								
	1974	52	4	74	5								

---

[1] An undetermined number of students may be served by both Title I and Chapter 3 and therefore be included in both figures.

[2] 1976-77 data.

[3] 1975-76 data.

about the purpose of the research and their approval was subsequently received.

A field staff was organized and trained to perform data collection. A team of two or more field researchers was sent to each site. They were responsible for distributing the questionnaires to all participating staff in the building, as well as conducting personal interviews with as many participating building level staff as possible during the three or four day visit.

All school site participants were assured that their responses, interview, and questionnaire, would be kept in strict confidence. As a general rule, the interviewers indicated that almost all respondents seemed to react openly, spontaneously, and candidly to the probe questions they were asked during the personal interviews.

The field staff were responsible for transcribing the interview data and collecting the completed questionnaires. However, most of the field staff did not participate extensively in the coding and subsequent analysis of the data received.

In summary, the fieldworkers were instructed to give questionnaires to the following people:

1. All kindergarten through fourth-grade classroom teachers who had worked in the school three years or more (plus kindergarten through fourth-grade teachers in the school less than three years if needed to make a total of at least six teachers).
2. At least one fifth-grade and one sixth-grade classroom teacher who had worked in the school three years or more (or less than three years if others not available).
3. All special reading and math teachers (compensatory education and non-compensatory education) who had worked in the school one year or more.
4. All administrative staff.

5. All paraprofessionals associated with the above teaching staff who had worked in the school three years or more.

Field workers were instructed to interview the following:

1. All classroom teachers responding to the questionnaire, if the total number was eight or less (others exceeding a total of eight at the discretion of the field workers).
2. All special reading and math teachers responding to the questionnaire.
3. All administrative staff responding to the questionnaire.
4. All paraprofessionals responding to the questionnaire, if the total number was four or less (others exceeding a total of four at the discretion of the field workers).

Table 2 presents a summary of the number of questionnaires and interviews completed at each school site. These data are further broken down by the role played in each site by the various respondents.

Description of Instruments

As noted above, data were collected by means of both questionnaires and interviews. The questionnaires were to be completed by all participating staff members at the site and interviews were conducted with as many of the participating staff members as possible in the three- or four-day visit.

Alternative forms of the questionnaire were developed for teachers, principals, and paraprofessionals. The majority of the questions were the same with slight wording modification to fit the role of the respondent. In addition, each alternative form included some unique questions pertaining to the specific staff position for which it was designed.

The items contained in the questionnaire were developed from the Michigan Department of Education Cost Effectiveness Study and the Brookover et al. School Climate Study. The items included in the teacher questionnaire are presented in Appendixes A-C of this report.

Table 2: Numbers of Questionnaires and Interviews Completed[1]

	Number of Questionnaire Respondents						Number of Interview Respondents					
Site	Classroom Teachers	Special Reading and Math Teachers		Principals and Assist. Principals	Para-Professionals		Classroom Teachers	Special Reading & Math Teachers		Principals and Asst. Principals	Para-Professionals	
		Comp. Ed.	Non-Comp Ed.			TOTAL		Comp. Ed.	Non-Comp Ed			TOTAL
A	12	1	0	1	1	15	11	1	0	1	1	14
B	10	1	1	1	3	16	10	0	1	1	3	15
C	7	1	1	1	5	15	8	1	1	1	5	16
D	6	3	0	1	2	12	6	3	0	1	2	12
E	8	2	0	1	0	11	8	2	0	1	1	12
F	10	3	0	1	2	16	8	2	0	1	2	14
G	11	1	0	1	1	14	12	1	0	1	1	15
H	8	1	0	1	5	16	9	1	0	2	5	17
Totals	72	13	2	8	19	115	72	11	2	9	20	115

---

[1] All questionnaire and interview data were collected between April 27, 1977 and May 13, 1977.

Though taken largely from earlier studies, the questions were modified to fit the purpose of this study. For example, a descriptive question such as, "How would you rate the staff morale in this school?" was followed by the question, "Has staff morale *changed* in the school during the past three years?"

The interview schedule consisted of several open-ended questions asking respondents to describe any *perceived changes* in the past few years in a broad range of areas thought to cover the entire school and instructional program. The questions were formulated from the literature in the field, the earlier studies, and the recommendations of two groups of professional educators and researchers. Alternative forms of the interview schedule were developed for teachers, principals and paraprofessionals. The questions were essentially the same but the wording was modified to fit the role of the respondent. The interview schedule for teachers is presented in Appendix D of this report.

The areas covered by the questions were: (1) student and community characteristics, (2) instructional goals and objectives, (3) teachers' expectations, (4) organizational patterns, (5) teaching methods and materials, (6) district and state level policies, and (7) interpersonal relationships and morale. In addition, the interview schedule contained a general question which asked each respondent to describe any changes s/he had perceived in the school during the past few years.

Neither the instrument nor the instructions specifically indicated to the respondent that the school was selected because it had changed (improved or declined) in achievement as measured by the MEAP Test.

Data Analysis Procedures

The data obtained from the eight schools through the questionnaires and interviews are analyzed in three sections: interview analysis, questionnaire analysis, and individual site descriptions. The interview and questionnaire analyses compare the response patterns in the improving and declining schools.

The individual site descriptions represent an attempt to synthesize and integrate all the available information gathered from a single site. These site descriptions are based on some anecdotal information gathered by the field research team as well as the questionnaire and interview responses.

Because of the limited number of schools included in this study, especially declining schools, the data were not subjected to rigorous statistical tests of significance. Rather, the analysis procedures were designed to descriptively summarize those dimensions on which improving and declining schools appeared to differ from each other. The analysis procedures used decision rules which were uniformly applied to the interview and questionnaire data. These decision rules allowed the researchers to determine which areas appeared to differ between improving and declining schools.

The particular analysis procedures and decision rules used with the questionnaire and interview data are described in the following paragraphs.

Interview Data Analysis Procedures

The first task in analyzing the interview data consisted of developing response categories for each of the questions. For this task, the distinction between responses from staff in the improving and declining schools was ignored. Care was taken to develop response categories which were as general and inclusive as possible without misrepresenting or distorting the individual responses.

Once the response categories were formulated, each item on the interview schedule was coded accordingly. After all the items were appropriately categorized, the common responses to each item were summed across all the interview schedules. Each response category found to have a total frequency of 15 or more was retained for the comparative analysis. Those response categories with a frequency of less than 15 were excluded from further analysis.

The comparative analysis of schools sought to identify those interview items on which the pattern of responses for improving and declining schools appeared to differ. In selecting those items, adjustments had to be made for the fact that the study included six improving and only two declining schools. The total number of interviews conducted in the improving schools was three times the number conducted in the declining schools. Therefore, the assumption was made that items which did not differentiate between the improving and declining schools would have an expected ratio of 3:1 in the various response categories.

In identifying items that appeared to reveal a difference in response patterns, the decision was made to include only those items for which the response pattern deviated from the 3:1 ratio by ±7.5% for either the improving or declining schools. Those interview items which evidenced such deviations were retained and are presented in the results section of this report. The other items were not included in the results section but are available in the appendix of the report.

Questionnaire Data Analysis Procedures

Unlike the interview, which was open-ended, the questionnaire used items with defined response categories. Therefore, the responses were easily coded according to the available response categories. Because of the length of the questionnaire and the relatively large number of regular classroom teachers completing it, the data were computer processed. The questionnaire data from the other school staff was hand coded and subsequently added to the machin -processed, regular classroom teacher data.

The decision rules for the comparative analysis of the questionnaire data were similar to those used for the interview data. Response categories with a frequency equal to 20% or more of the total responses to an item were retained for comparative analysis, while those with a frequency of less than 20% were excluded from further analysis. In cases where adjacent response categories showed similar response patterns and had a total frequency of 20% or more, the categories were combined and retained for further analysis. If the response pattern in a category differed from the expected ratio by ±7.5% or more, the category was considered to favor either the improving or declining schools. If a questionnaire item contained at least one response category favoring the improving schools and one response category favoring the declining schools, it was retained because it discriminated between the improving and declining schools and is presented in the results section of this report. If an item contained only a response category favoring the improving or declining schools, or if it did not differentiate between improving and declining schools, it was not included in the results but is available in Appendixes A and B.

Site Description Procedures

The individual responses to each question were transcribed so that all responses to a given question by the staff in a single school could be read as a group. Two teams of readers consisting of an experienced elementary school teacher, an elementary school principal, and a Michigan Department of Education staff member read the transcribed protocols for four of the schools (three improving and one declining). The readers were not informed about the changing nature of the schools prior to their reading. The readers were asked to characterize each school on the following dimensions: (1) school organization, (2) functions of the school, (3) methods and materials used, (4) interpersonal relationships, (5) staff perceptions of the students and community, and (6) staff perceptions of the way in which they were meeting educational needs.

A copy of the guidelines given to the readers is included in Appendix E. In addition to the reader observations, the senior researcher read all of the protocols several times and formulated independent observations for each school.

A third source of data was the debriefing of the field workers. The project directors interviewed the field research staff as they returned from each school. These debriefing interviews revealed the interviewers' general impressions and some specific data not included in the questionnaires and interview results.

The case descriptions, therefore, represent a synthesis and integration of all information available for a given school.

ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

The analysis and findings portion of this report is divided into three sections: (1) Interview Analysis and Findings, (2) Questionnaire Analysis and Findings, and (3) Individual Site Descriptions. The items presented are those for which the pattern of responses for the improving schools appeared to differ from the responses for the declining schools. The differences should *not* be read as statistically significant differences since no statistical procedures were utilized. The reported results should be interpreted as suggestive of areas in which the two types of schools appeared to be different.

Interview Analysis and Findings

School Organization

Three items pertaining to the organization of the schools appeared to have changed in the improving and declining schools over the past three years. The three items were related to the principal's role, staff evaluations, and approaches to student discipline.

Table 3 gives a summary of the responses to the question, "Has the principal's role in the school changed over the past three years?" Examination of Table 3 reveals that staff in the improving schools indicated that the principal had become more involved in the instructional program.

Table 3: Reported Increase in Principal Involvement in Instructional Program

Role of Respondent	Decliners	Improvers *[3]	Totals
Regular Teacher	2	11	13
Comp. Ed. Teacher	0	5	5
Paraprofessional	0	0	0
Principal	0	2	2
Totals	2	18	20

---

[3] Throughout the analysis of the data, an asterisk(*) indicates a group of schools, decliners or improvers, in which a clearly greater proportion of the respondents than expected gave a specific response to the question.

A second response category pertaining to changes in the principal's role also appeared to differ between the improving and declining schools. In this case, the staff in the declining schools reported that the principal had become more supportive of the instructional staff. Table 4 summarizes the responses indicating an increase in the principal's supportive role.

Table 4: Reported Increase in Principal's Level of Support for Instructional Staff

Role of Respondent	Decliners*	Improvers	Totals
Regular Teacher	7	6	13
Comp. Ed. Teacher	0	0	0
Paraprofessional	1	0	1
Principal	1	0	1
Totals	9	6	15

The interview contained a question which asked the respondents to indicate whether they had perceived any changes in approaches to discipline in the school during the past three years. The improving and declining schools appeared to differ rather dramatically on this item. Inspection of Table 5 reveals that discipline had become less of a problem and the principal more strict in the improving schools.

Table 5: Perceived Improvement in Discipline and Stricter Principal

Role of Respondent	Decliners	Improvers*	Totals
Regular Teacher	0	14	14
Comp. Ed. Teacher	0	3	3
Paraprofessional	0	1	1
Principal	0	2	2
Totals	0	20	20

Respondents from the improving schools indicated that principals had increased the amount of teacher evaluation over the past three years. When asked the question, "Over the past three or four years, have you noticed any changes in evaluation of teachers and other staff?" the staff responded that they now received more evaluation than in past years (see Table 6).

Table 6: Reported Increase in Amount of Evaluation

Role of Respondent	Decliners	Improvers*	Totals
Regular Teacher	1	10	11
Comp. Ed. Teacher	0	1	1
Paraprofessional	0	0	0
Principal	0	5	5
Totals	1	16	17

Functions of the School

Two items regarding the functions of the schools appeared to change in the improving and declining schools over the past three years. The two items were related to changes in teacher or administrative expectations and to changes in the goals and objectives of the schools.

The interviewers asked the respondents to comment on any perceived changes in the level of teacher or administrative expectations for the students in the schools. The responses from the improving schools indicated that the staff had perceived a recent increase in the level of teacher or administrative expectations (see Table 7).

Table 8 portrays the results of the interview question, "Over the past three years, have you noticed any changes in goals and objectives?" which revealed that the improving schools have placed an increasing emphasis on reading and math skills.

Table 7: Perceived Increase in Teacher or Administrative Expectations

Role of Respondent	Decliners	Improvers*	Totals
Regular Teacher	1	23	24
Comp. Ed. Teacher	0	6	6
Paraprofessional	0	4	4
Principal	0	1	1
Totals	1	34	35

Table 8: Reported Increase in Emphasis on Reading and Math Skills

Role of Respondent	Decliners	Improvers*	Totals
Regular Teacher	2	10	12
Comp. Ed. Teacher	0	1	1
Paraprofessional	0	5	5
Principal	0	0	0
Totals	2	16	18

The improving schools, besides emphasizing reading and math skills to a greater extent than the declining schools, also reported that their objectives had become more specific over the past three years (see Table 9).

Table 9: Reported Increase in Specificity of Objectives

Role of Respondent	Decliners	Improvers*	Totals
Regular Teacher	2	7	9
Comp. Ed. Teacher	0	3	3
Paraprofessional	0	1	1
Principal	0	3	3
Totals	2	14	16

Methods and Materials, Policies and Practices

The items pertaining to methods and materials which evidenced differential change in the improving and declining schools in the past three years were related to instructional strategies, special programs and student evaluation and reporting procedures.

The staff of the improving schools answered the question, "Have you noticed any changes in instructional strategies over the past three years?" by indicating an increased emphasis on basic skills (see Table 10).

Table 10: Reported Increase in Emphasis on Basic Skills

Role of Respondent	Decliners	Improvers*	Totals
Regular Teacher	3	7	10
Comp. Ed. Teacher	0	1	1
Paraprofessional	0	5	5
Principal	0	3	3
Totals	3	16	19

On the other hand, as seen in Table 11, staff from the declining schools indicated that their instructional strategies had changed as a consequence of the implementation of new math programs.

Table 11: Reported Increase in New Math Programs

Role of Respondent	Decliners*	Improvers	Totals
Regular Teacher	6	7	13
Comp. Ed. Teacher	0	1	1
Paraprofessional	0	1	1
Principal	0	0	0
Totals	6	9	15

Table 12 indicates differential responses between the improving and declining schools in response to the question, "Over the past three years, have you noticed any changes in special programs?" Respondents from the declining schools reported an increase in compensatory education reading and math programs.

Table 12: Reported Increase in Compensatory Education Reading and Math Programs

Role of Respondent	Decliners*	Improvers	Totals
Regular Teacher	16	22	38
Comp. Ed. Teacher	0	3	3
Paraprofessional	2	4	6
Principal	0	5	5
Totals	18	34	52

When the interview question was asked, "Over the past three years, have you noticed any changes in student evaluation and reporting procedures?" the declining schools' respondents related that there had been report card revisions (Table 13) and increased parent communication (Table 14).

Table 13: Reported Revisions of Student Report Cards

Role of Respondent	Decliners*	Improvers	Totals
Regular Teacher	16	15	31
Comp. Ed. Teacher	0	0	0
Paraprofessional	0	1	1
Principal	1	1	2
Totals	17	17	34

Table 14: Reported Increase in Parent Communication

Role of Respondent	Decliners *	Improvers	Totals
Regular Teacher	12	4	16
Comp. Ed. Teacher	0	0	0
Paraprofessional	1	0	1
Principal	1	1	2
Totals	14	5	19

Interpersonal Relationships

In the area of interpersonal relationships only one item differentiated between the improving and declining schools. The item concerned principal-teacher relationships.

Table 15 indicates that in the declining schools, principal-teacher relationships became more open, easy, and friendly. These findings were indicated by responses to the question, "Over the past three years, have you noticed any changes in principal-teacher relationships?"

Table 15: Reported Increase in Open, Easy, and Friendly Relationships

Role of Respondent	Decliners*	Improvers	Totals
Regular Teacher	14	3	17
Comp. Ed. Teacher	0	0	0
Paraprofessional	1	1	2
Principal	1	0	1
Totals	16	4	20

Staff Perceptions of Students and Community

Two items pertaining to staff perceptions of the students and community differentiated between the improving and declining schools. The two items regarded student characteristics and parent involvement.

The improving schools' respondents felt that their student behaviors and attitudes had improved over the period in question. When asked, "Over the past three or four years, have you noticed any changes in student characteristics?" the respondents from the improving schools indicated a favorable change in student attitudes and behavior (see Table 16).

Table 16: Reported Improvement in Student Behavior and Attitudes

Role of Respondent	Decliners	Improvers*	Totals
Regular Teacher	3	21	24
Comp. Ed. Teacher	0	5	5
Paraprofessional	3	5	8
Principal	1	2	3
Totals	7	33	40

On the other hand, when asked the same question, the respondents from the declining schools reported that their students' home environment had become less favorable over the past three years (see Table 17).

Respondents from the improving schools related that they felt parents had become less involved over the past three or four years. They indicated this feeling through their responses to the question, Over the past three or four years, have you noticed any changes in parent involvement?" (see Table 18).

Table 17: Reported Decline in Favorable Home Environment

Role of Respondent	Decliners*	Improvers	Totals
Regular Teacher	13	8	21
Comp. Ed. Teacher	0	0	0
Paraprofessional	0	1	1
Principal	1	1	2
Totals	14	10	24

Table 18: Reported Decrease in Parent Involvement

Role of Respondent	Decliners	Improvers*	Totals
Regular Teacher	2	15	17
Comp. Ed. Teacher	0	5	5
Paraprofessional	1	3	4
Principal	0	3	3
Totals	3	26	29

Staff Perceptions of Effectiveness

In this category there was one question which differentiated between the improving and declining schools, the respondents' perceptions of changes in student achievement levels.

When asked the question, "Are you aware of any changes in student achievement levels that have occurred over the past three years?" the respondents from the improving schools reported improvement in their students' achievement levels (see Table 19).

Table 19: Reported Improvement in Student Achievement Levels

Role of Respondents	Decliners	Improvers*	Totals
Regular Teacher	6	29	35
Comp. Ed. Teacher	0	7	7
Paraprofessional	2	7	9
Principal	1	4	5
Totals	9	47	56

Questionnaire Analysis and Findings

The questionnaire analysis and findings section is organized in a manner similar to the interview section. The items which appeared to show differences between the improving and declining schools are discussed under six headings: (1) school organization, (2) perceived functions of the school, (3) methods and materials, policies and practices, (4) interpersonal relationships, (5) staff perceptions of students and community, and (6) staff perceptions of effectiveness. This section is divided into three parts. The first part will deal with general questions on which the improving and declining schools differentiated based on total staff responses. The second part will report findings from questions specifically related to compensatory education programs which show differences between the improving and declining schools based on total staff responses. The third part reports on questions for which classroom teachers of the improving and declining schools showed different responses, but for which other staff did not substantiate the responses of the classroom teachers.

Analysis of General Questionnaire Data

School organization. The general questions related to school organization factors did not show any differences between the improving and declining schools. A number of questions related to compensatory education did show differences and will be reported in the second part of the questionnaire analysis.

Perceived functions of the school. One item pertaining to perceived functions of the school showed differences between the improving and declining schools over the past three years. The item pertains to the Michigan State Board of Education's Accountability Model. The question asked was "Which stages of the accountability model supported by the Michigan State Board of Education have been implemented *for the first time* during the past three years?" The respondents from the declining schools reported that the stage "Identify Goals" was implemented for the first time during the past three years. This was not true of the improving school respondents (see Table 20).

Table 20: Reported Implementation of the "Identify Goals" Accountability Stage for the First Time During the Past Three Years

Site	Role of Respondent	No	Yes	Totals
Decliners	Regular Teacher	3	9	12
	Comp. Ed. Teacher	1	0	1
	Principal	0	2	2
	Totals	4	11*	15
Improvers	Regular Teacher	32	19	51
	Comp. Ed. Teacher	5	6	11
	Principal	1	5	6
	Totals	38*	30	68

Methods and materials, policies and practices. There were many items in this area which showed differences between the improving and declining schools over the past three years. The items included: (1) the number of term hours in reading survey courses completed by teachers, (2) the average number of hours spent in instructional contact teaching reading, (3) the percent of time spent introducing new topics and materials, and (4) changes in the amount of time in administrative or record-keeping activities.

The declining school respondents reported more hours accumulated in reading survey (overview) courses (Table 21). They also indicated that a greater percentage of their time was spent introducing or discussing new topics (Table 22) and that the time spent introducing or discussing new topics had remained the same over the past three years. The improving school respondents reported that the time spent introducing or discussing new topics had increased (Table 23). The tables clearly show the differences between the improving and declining schools.

Table 21: Reported Number of Term Hours Taken in Reading Survey (Overview Course)

		2 hours or less	3-5 hours	6-8 hours	9-11 hours	12-14 hours	15 or more	Totals
Decliners	Reg. Teacher	0	2	3	2	1	5*	13
Improvers	Reg. Teacher	4	8*	7	2	1	8	30

Table 22: Reported Percentage of Student Contact Time in Reading Spent Introducing or Discussing New Topics or Materials

Site	Role of Respondent	5% or less	6-10%	11-15%	16-20%	21-25%	26-30%	Over 30%	Totals
Decliners	Reg. Teacher	0	1	0	0	2	2	16*	21
Improvers	Reg. Teacher	2	1	6*	4*	8*	1	21	43

Table 23: Reported Change in Percentage of Contact Time in Reading Spent Introducing or Discussing New Topics or Materials

Site	Role of Respondent	Decreased	Remained the Same	Increased	Totals
Decliners	Reg. Teacher	1	12*	8	21
Improvers	Reg. Teacher	3	18	28*	49

Interpersonal relationships. The questions asked pertaining to interpersonal relationships did not show any differences between the improving and declining schools; however, a question related to satisfaction of professional relationships among teachers did differentiate when based on teacher responses alone. (The third part of the questionnaire analysis will summarize questions differentiating between the improving and declining schools based on teacher responses only.)

Staff perceptions of students and community. Under this heading there were five items which showed differences between improving and declining schools. The items were: (1) staff ratings of student academic ability, (2) changes in staff ratings of student academic ability, (3) perceptions of principal's rating of student ability, (4) perceptions of change in principal's rating of student ability, and (5) frequency of parent initiation of contacts concerning student social behavior.

When respondents were asked the question, "Generally, how would you rate the academic ability of the students in this school compared to those in other schools?" the improving school respondents tended to rate their students' academic ability at a higher level than did the declining school respondents (see Table 24).

Table 24: Reported Ratings of Student Academic Ability

Site	Role of Respondents	Well Below Average	Below Average	Average	Above Average	Well Above Average	Totals
Decliners	Regular Teacher	3	12	4	0	0	19
	Comp. Ed. Teacher	0	2	0	0	0	2
	Paraprofessional	0	1	1	0	0	2
	Principal	0	1	1	0	0	2
	Totals	3	16*	6	0	0	25
Improvers	Regular Teacher	4	15	21	8	1	49
	Comp. Ed. Teacher	0	3	5	2	0	10
	Paraprofessional	0	2	8	3	0	13
	Prinicpal	0	3	2	1	0	6
	Totals	4	23	36*	14*	1	78

Respondents in the improving schools also perceived a change for the better in their students' academic ability over the past three years. When asked, "Over the past three years, do you feel that the academic ability of the students in this school has decreased, remained the same, or increased?" respondents in the improving and declining schools answered as shown in Table 25.

Tables 26 and 27 show the staff's perceptions of the principal's rating of student academic ability and perceived changes in his or her rating over the past three years. The staff was asked the question, "Generally, how does your principal rate the academic ability of the students in this school as compared to those in other schools?" (Table 26).

Table 25: Reported Changes in Student Academic Ability Over the Past Three Years

Site	Role of Respondent	Decreased	Remained the Same	Increased	Totals
Decliners	Regular Teacher	10	7	4	21
	Comp. Ed. Teacher	0	2	0	2
	Paraprofessional	0	0	2	2
	Principal	0	2	0	2
	Totals	10*	11	6	27
Improvers	Regular Teacher	10	24	17	51
	Comp. Ed. Teacher	1	6	4	11
	Paraprofessional	0	7	7	14
	Principal	1	3	2	6
	Totals	12	40*	30*	82

Table 26: Reported Staff Perceptions of Principal's Rating of Student Academic Ability

Site	Role of Respondent	Well Below Average	Below Average	Average	Above Average	Well Above Average	Totals
Decliners	Reg. Teacher	1	12	5	0	1	19
	Comp. Ed. Teacher	0	1	1	0	0	2
	Paraprofessional	0	0	2	0	0	2
	Totals	1	13*	8	0	1	23
Improvers	Reg. Teacher	1	15	22	8	2	48
	Comp. Ed. Teacher	0	2	7	2	0	11
	Paraprofessional	0	0	7	7	0	14
	Totals	1	17	36*	17*	2	73

The staff was then asked if this rating had declined, remained the same or improved over the past three years (Table 27). The improving school respondents reported their perceptions of the principal's rating of the students' academic ability as average or above average. They also indicated that the principal felt the students' academic ability had improved over the past three years. On the other hand, the declining school respondents perceived that their principal's rating of the students' academic ability was below average and had not changed over the past three years.

Table 27: Reported Staff Perceptions of Change in Principal's Rating of Student Academic Ability Over the Past Three Years

Site	Role of Respondent	Declined	Remained the Same	Improved	Totals
Decliners	Regular Teacher	2	13	5	20
	Comp. Ed. Teacher	0	2	0	2
	Paraprofessional	0	1	1	2
	Totals	2	16*	6	24
Improvers	Regular Teacher	5	18	22	45
	Comp. Ed. Teacher	0	5	5	10
	Paraprofessional	0	4	11	15
	Totals	5	27	38*	70

When respondents were asked the question, "How frequently do parents initiate individual contacts concerning a student's social behavior?", the improving school staff reported more contacts than did the declining school staff (see Table 28).

Table 28: Reported Frequency of Parent Initiated Contacts Concerning Student Social Behavior

Site	Role of Respondent	Almost Never	Seldom	Occasionally	Frequently	Very Often	Totals
Decliners	Regular Teacher	8	10	4	0	0	22
	Comp. Ed. Teacher	1	1	0	0	0	2
	Principal	1	0	0	1	0	2
	Totals	10*	11*	4	1	0	26
Improvers	Regular Teacher	14	13	17	6	1	51
	Comp. Ed. Teacher	4	4	3	0	0	11
	Principal	0	2	3	1	0	6
	Totals	18	19	23*	7	1	68

Staff perceptions of effectiveness. One item relating to staff perceptions of effectiveness differentiated between the improving and declining schools. The respondents were asked the question, "Generally, how would you describe the morale of teachers in your school?" The staff of the improving schools indicated that teacher morale was average, while the staff of the declining schools reported that teacher morale was fairly high or extremely high (see Table 29).

Table 29: Reported Levels of Teacher Morale

Site	Role of Respondent	Extremely Low	Rather Low	Average	Fairly High	Extremely High	Totals
Decliners	Regular Teacher	0	0	2	13	8	23
	Comp. Ed. Teacher	0	0	2	0	0	2
	Paraprofessional	0	0	1	3	0	4
	Principal	0	0	0	1	1	2
	Totals	0	0	5	17*	9*	31
Improvers	Regular Teacher	1	8	17	16	8	50
	Comp. Ed. Teacher	0	1	5	4	1	11
	Paraprofessional	0	0	5	6	4	15
	Principal	0	0	4	2	0	6
	Totals	1	9	31*	28	13	82

Analysis of Questionnaire Data on Compensatory Education Program

There were two dimensions in which items showed differences. They were: (1) organization of the school and (2) methods and materials, policies and practices.

Organization of the school. There were four items which differentiated under this heading. The items were: (1) the number of compensatory education students in class, (2) the number of students present during compensatory education activities, (3) the number of paraprofessionals involved in compensatory education activities, and (4) change in the number of staff involved in compensatory education activities.

Respondents from the improving schools indicated that they have more compensatory education students in their class than respondents from the declining schools (see Table 30). The question asked was, "How many compensatory education students do you have in your class?"

Table 30: Reported Number of Compensatory Education Students in Class

Site	Role of Respondent	5 or less	6-10	11-15	16-20	More than 20	Totals
Decliners	Reg. Teacher	8*	5	6	0	1	20
Improvers	Reg. Teacher	8	15*	12	3	1	39

When staff who were involved with compensatory education students were asked, "How many students are present in your classroom on the average during the time in which you conduct your compensatory reading activities?" the improving school respondents indicated a greater number of students present than did the declining school respondents (see Table 31).

Table 31: Reported Number of Students Present During Time in Which Compensatory Education Reading Activities are Conducted

Site	Role of Respondent	5 or less	6-10	11-15	16-20	21-25	26-30	Over 30	Totals
Decliners	Regular Teacher	1	0	1	2	7	2	0	13
	Comp. Ed. Teacher	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	2
	Totals	1	1	1	2	8*	2	0	15
Improvers	Regular Teacher	1	2	2	4	5	9	2	25
	Comp. Ed. Teacher	0	2	1	3	2	0	0	8
	Totals	1	4	3	7	7	9*	2	33

When teachers were asked, "How many paraprofessionals are directly involved in providing reading instruction for your compensatory education students?" the declining school respondents indicated that more paraprofessionals were directly involved in providing reading instruction for compensatory education students than did the improving school respondents (see Table 32).

Table 32: Reported Number of Paraprofessionals Directly Involved in Providing Reading Instruction for Compensatory Education Students

Site	Role of Respondent	0	1	2	3 or more	Totals
Decliners	Regular Teacher	3	5	1	7*	16
Improvers	Regular Teacher	5	19*	3	4	31

Table 33 indicates that the number of staff members directly involved in providing reading instruction to compensatory education students, besides the teachers, has increased over the past three years in the declining schools and has remained the same in the improving schools.

Table 33: Reported Change in Number of Staff Members Directly Involved in Providing Reading Instruction to Compensatory Education Students Over the Past Three Years

Site	Role of Respondent	Decreased	Remained the Same	Increased	Totals
Decliners	Regular Teacher	0	5	11*	16
Improvers	Regular Teacher	5	23*	6	34

Methods and materials, policies and practices. There were quite a few items in this area which showed differences between the improving and declining schools over the past three years. The items were: (1) degree of involvement in determination of which students would receive compensatory education instruction, (2) degree to which staff involved with compensatory education students spent non-contact time planning for other reading activities (non-comp. ed.), (3) degree to which compensatory education staff rely on programmed instruction, emphasizing interrelationships in paragraphs, and attention span exercises, and (4) whether the usage of these techniques has changed over the past three years.

Table 34 shows that the declining school teachers are more involved in the determination of which of their students are provided compensatory education assistance than the improving school teachers. This information was obtained in answer to the question, "To what degree were you involved in the determination of which of your students would be provided compensatory education assistance?"

Table 34: Reported Degree of Involvement in Determination of Which Students are Provided Compensatory Education Assistance

Site	Role of Respondent	Not At All Involved	Very Slightly Involved	Somewhat Involved	Moderately Invol.	Heavily Invol.	Totals
Decliners	Regular Teacher	0	2	3	4	9	18
	Comp. Ed. Teacher	0	0	0	1	1	2
	Totals	0	2	3	5*	10*	20
Improvers	Regular Teacher	5	7	12	2	11	37
	Comp. Ed. Teacher	0	0	2	1	6	9
	Totals	5*	7*	14*	3	17	46

Staff involved with compensatory education programs were asked a question concerning their time spent during regular working hours but not in contact with students. This question involved 11 categories of activities. Staff who did not have compensatory education students were not asked the question. The only category which showed a difference in responses between the improving and declining schools was the amount of time spent planning for other reading activities (non-comp. ed.). Table 35 shows that the declining schools indicated a greater percentage of time spent in this activity than did the improving schools.

When asked the questions, "Indicate the degree to which you rely on programmed instruction with your compensatory education students," (Table 36) and "Has the degree to which you rely on this approach changed

Table 35: Reported Time Spent Planning for Other Reading Activities (Non-Compensatory Education)

Site	Role of Respondent	Less than 15%	16-40%	More than 40%	Totals
Decliners	Regular Teacher	1	14	1	16
	Comp. Ed. Teacher	2	0	0	2
	Paraprofessional	0	0	0	0
	Totals	3	14*	1	18
Improvers	Regular Teacher	14	13	3	30
	Comp. Ed. Teacher	10	0	0	10
	Paraprofessional	4	1	0	5
	Totals	28*	14	3	45

over the past three years?" (Table 37), the declining school respondents indicated that they rely on programmed instruction heavily, whereas the improving school respondents indicated that they rely on it occasionally. The declining school staff also indicated a change in the degree to which they rely on programmed instruction. When asked to describe this change, most of the staff in the declining schools responded that more material had become available for their use over the past three years.

Table 36: Reported Degree of Reliance on Programmed Instruction with Compensatory Education Students

Site	Role of Respondent	Not Familiar With It	Familiar But Don't Use It	Rely Occasionally On It	Freqquently	Rely On It Heavily	Totals
Decliners	Regular Teacher	1	3	3	4	2	13
	Comp. Ed. Teacher	0	2	0	0	0	2
	Totals	1	5	3	4*	2*	15
Improvers	Regular Teacher	2	8	13	2	1	26
	Comp. Ed. Teacher	1	1	6	2	0	10
	Totals	3	9	19*	4	1	36

Table 37: Reported Change in Reliance on Programmed Instruction with Compensatory Education Students Over the Past Three Years

Site	Role of Respondent	No	Yes	Totals
Decliners	Regular Teacher	7	7*	14
Improvers	Regular Teacher	22*	8	30

Teachers were asked to indicate the degree to which they use emphasis on interrelationships in paragraphs with their compensatory education students. The improving school respondents indicated that they use this technique more frequently than the declining school respondents (Table 38). However, the declining school respondents reported greater reliance on attention span exercises than did the improving school respondents (Table 39).

Table 38: Reported Reliance on Emphasis on Interrelationships in Paragraphs in Providing Reading Instruction to Compensatory Education Students

Site	Role of Respondent	Do Not Use It	Use It Almost Never	Use It Occasionally	Use It Frequently	Use It Most of the Time	Totals
Decliners	Reg. Teacher	3	1	4	4*	1	13
Improvers	Reg. Teacher	5	2	7	4	7*	25

Table 39: Reported Reliance on Attention Span Exercises in Providing Reading Instruction to Compensatory Education Students

Site	Role of Respondent	Do Not Use It	Use It Almost Never	Use It Occasionally	Use It Frequently	Use It Most of the Time	Totals
Decliners	Reg. Teacher	1	0	4	2	6*	13
Improvers	Reg. Teacher	13*	2	6	4	8	33

When asked, "Has your usage of the above techniques changed over the past three years?", the declining school respondents reported a change in the degree of reliance on these techniques, while the improving school respondents indicated no change (Table 40).

When asked to describe this change, most of the declining school respondents stated an increased need for attention span exercises with their students.

Table 40: Reported Change in Use of Paragraph Interrelationships and Attention Span Exercises

Site	Role of Respondent	No	Yes	Totals
Decliners	Regular Teacher	6	6*	12
Improvers	Regular Teacher	23*	6	29

Analysis of Questions Which Showed Differences for Classroom Teachers

Functions of the school. There were two items involving the functions of the school which differentiated between improving and declining schools. Both items were related to the six-stage accountability model as defined by the Michigan State Board of Education. The improving school teachers reported using the stage "Recommend for Improvement", whereas the declining school teachers indicated that they did not use it (Table 41).

Table 42 indicates that the declining school teachers implemented the stage "Develop Performance Objectives" for the first time during the past three years. This was reported by teachers in response to the question, "Which of the stages of the accountability model have been implemented for the first time during the past three years?"

Table 41: Reported Implementation of the Accountability Model Stage "Recommend for Improvement"

Site	Role of Respondent	No	Yes	Totals
Decliners	Regular Teacher	9*	3	12
	Comp. Ed. Teacher	0	1	1
	Principal	2	0	2
	Totals	11	4	15
Improvers	Regular Teacher	24	27*	51
	Comp. Ed. Teacher	7	4	11
	Principal	3	3	6
	Totals	34	34	68

Table 42: Reported Implementation of the Accountability Model Stage "Develop Performance Objectives" for the First Time During the Past Three Years

Site	Role of Respondent	No	Yes	Totals
Decliners	Regular Teacher	3	9*	12
	Comp. Ed. Teacher	1	0	1
	Principal	2	0	2
	Totals	6	9	15
Improvers	Regular Teacher	29*	22	51
	Comp. Ed. Teacher	6	5	11
	Principal	1	5	6
	Totals	36	32	68

Methods and materials, policies and practices. Under this heading, three questions differentiated between the improving and declining school teachers. All three questions revolved around the amount of time spent in various areas of school activities, both in and out of school. The items were: (1) amount of time spent in instructional contact teaching reading, (2) amount of time spent in administrative or record-keeping activities, and (3) average hours per week spent on compensatory education reading activities outside of school.

When asked the question, "What is the average number of hours per week you are in direct instructional contact teaching reading?", the improving school teachers reported more hours spent in this activity than declining school teachers did (see Table 43).

Table 43: Reported Amount of Time Spent in Direct Instructional Contact Teaching Reading

Site	Role of Respondent	5 hours or less	6-8 hours	9-11 hours	12-14 hours	15 or more	Totals
Decliners	Regular Teacher	11*	1	6	1	3	22
	Comp. Ed. Teacher	0	0	0	0	2	2
	Paraprofessional	1	0	0	1	1	3
	Totals	12	1	6	2	6	27
Improvers	Regular Teacher	16	17*	3	5	8	49
	Comp. Ed. Teacher	4	1	1	1	3	10
	Paraprofessional	3	5	0	1	4	13
	Totals	23	23	4	7	15	72

Table 44 indicates that over the past three years the improving school teachers felt that the time they spent in administrative or record-keeping activities had increased, whereas the declining school teachers felt that time spent in this activity had remained the same.

Table 44: Reported Change in Time Spent on Administrative or Record-Keeping Activities During the Past Three Years

Site	Role of Respondent	Decreased	Remained the Same	Increased	Totals
Decliners	Regular Teacher	2	12*	7	21
	Paraprofessional	1	0	1	2
	Totals	3	12	8	23
Improvers	Regular Teacher	1	18	30*	49
	Paraprofessional	1	6	8	15
	Totals	2	24	38	64

The staff involved in compensatory education programs were asked the question, "Over the past three years, has the average number of hours per week you spent on compensatory education reading activities outside of regular working hours decreased, remained the same, or increased?" The declining school teachers felt that the number of hours had increased while the improving school teachers felt that the number of hours had remained the same. It should be noted that one of the declining schools had implemented a compensatory education program for the first time this year (see Table 45).

Table 45: Reported Change in Number of Hours Spent on Compensatory Education Reading Activities Outside of Regular Working Hours

Site	Role of Respondent	Decreased	Remained the Same	Increased	Totals
Decliners	Regular Teacher	1	5	7*	13
	Comp. Ed. Teacher	0	1	0	1
	Paraprofessional	0	0	0	0
	Totals	1	6	7	14
Improvers	Regular Teacher	4	17*	9	30
	Comp. Ed. Teacher	1	5	3	9
	Paraprofessional	0	3	2	5
	Totals	5	25	14	44

Interpersonal relationships. One item in this area differentiated between the improving and declining school teacher responses. The item was related to satisfaction with professional relationships among teachers.

Table 46 indicates that when asked the question, "How satisfied are you with the professional relationships among teachers in your school?" the declining school teachers felt extremely satisfied, while the improving school teachers felt moderately satisfied.

Table 46: Reported Satisfaction With the Professional Relationships Among Teachers in the School

Site	Role of Respondent	Extremely Dissatisfied	Moderately Dissat.	Somewhat Dissat.	Moderately Satis.	Extr. Satisfied	Totals
Decliners	Regular Teacher	0	0	2	8	13*	23
	Comp. Ed. Teacher	0	0	0	2	0	2
	Totals	0	0	2	10	13	25
Improvers	Regular Teacher	1	3	4	27*	16	51
	Comp. Ed. Teacher	1	0	2	6	2	11
	Totals	2	3	6	33	18	62

Staff perceptions of students and community. There were four items which showed differences in responses between the improving and declining school teachers in their perceptions of the students and the community. The items involved the teachers' perceptions of: (1) the number of students who seek extra work, (2) the number of students who can be taught to master the basic skills, (3) the number of students for whom high school completion is a realistic goal, and (4) the number of students for whom completion of college is a realistic goal.

When asked the question, "How many students in your class seek extra work so that they may get better grades?" teachers in the improving schools felt that some of their students would seek extra work, whereas the declining school teachers felt that few of their students would seek extra work (see Table 47).

Table 48 indicates that the improving school teachers felt that *all* of their students could be taught to master the basic skills while the declining school teachers felt that *most* of their students could be taught to master the basic skills. The question which elicited these responses was, "How many teachers in this school feel that almost all of their students can be taught to master the basic skills?"

Table 47: Reported Number of Students Who Seek Extra Work so That They May Get Better Grades

Site	Role of Respondent	None	Few	Some	Most	All	Totals
Decliners	Regular Teacher	1	11*	5	1	0	18
	Comp. Ed. Teacher	1	0	1	0	0	2
	Paraprofessional	0	1	0	0	0	1
	Principal	0	0	2	0	0	2
	Totals	2	12	8	1	0	23
Improvers	Regular Teacher	4	13	24*	6	0	47
	Comp. Ed. Teacher	0	7	2	1	0	10
	Paraprofessional	0	8	2	3	0	13
	Principal	0	1	5	0	0	6
	Totals	4	29	33	10	0	76

Table 48: Reported Number of Students Teachers Felt Could be Taught to Master the Basic Skills

Site	Role of Respondent	None	Few	Some	Most	All	Totals
Decliners	Regular Teacher	0	3	0	16*	4	23
	Comp. Ed. Teacher	0	2	0	0	0	2
	Paraprofessional	0	0	0	2	1	3
	Principal	0	0	0	1	1	2
	Totals	0	5	0	19	6	30
Improvers	Regular Teacher	1	7	0	24	19*	51
	Comp. Ed. Teacher	0	1	1	6	3	11
	Paraprofessional	0	0	3	6	6	15
	Principal	0	0	2	3	1	6
	Totals	1	8	6	39	29	83

Staff members were asked the question, "Completion of high school is a realistic goal which you set for how many of your students?" The teachers in the improving schools felt that high school completion was a realistic goal for all of their students; on the other hand, the declining school teachers felt that high school completion was a realistic goal for most of their students (see Table 49).

Table 50 shows that when school staff were asked the question, "Completion of college is a realistic goal for how many of your students?"

the improving school teachers indicated that a range of some or most of their students could complete college, whereas the declining school teachers felt that few of their students could realistically complete college.

Table 49: Reported Number of Students for Whom High School Completion is a Realistic Goal

Site	Role of Respondent	None	Few	Some	Most	All	Totals
Decliners	Regular Teacher	0	0	1	16*	5	22
	Comp. Ed. Teacher	0	0	1	1	0	2
	Paraprofessional	0	0	0	2	0	2
	Principal	0	0	0	1	1	2
	Totals	0	0	2	20	6	28
Improvers	Regular Teacher	0	1	5	26	19*	51
	Comp. Ed. Teacher	0	0	0	6	5	11
	Paraprofessional	0	0	2	7	5	14
	Principal	0	0	0	3	3	6
	Totals	0	1	7	42	32	82

Table 50: Reported Number of Students for Whom Completion of College is a Realistic Goal

Site	Role of Respondent	None	Few	Some	Most	All	Totals
Decliners	Regular Teacher	1	15*	6	0	0	22
	Comp. Ed. Teacher	1	0	1	0	0	2
	Paraprofessional	0	2	0	0	0	2
	Principal	0	1	1	0	0	2
	Totals	2	18	8	0	0	28
Improvers	Regular Teacher	2	18	18*	11*	2	51
	Comp. Ed. Teacher	0	3	8	0	0	11
	Paraprofessional	0	1	7	3	0	11
	Principal	0	1	4	1	0	6
	Totals	2	23	37	15	2	79

Staff perceptions of effectiveness. In the area of staff perceptions of effectiveness only one item differentiated between the responses of teachers from the improving and declining schools. This item is related to the influence a teacher can have on student achievement.

When asked the question, "Has your opinion of the influence a teacher can have on student achievement changed over the past three years?" the teachers in the improving schools answered "no" (see Table 51). Approximately half of the teachers from declining schools who answered "yes" explained that less favorable home conditions had made it more difficult to influence student achievement, while half felt that they now had more resources or better relationships with their students and could exert a greater influence on student achievement.

Table 51: Reported Perceptions of Whether the Influence a Teacher Can Have on Student Achievement Had Changed Over the Past Three Years

Site	Role of Respondent	No	Yes	Totals
Decliners	Regular Teacher	11	12*	23
	Comp. Ed. Teacher	2	0	2
	Paraprofessional	2	1	3
	Principal	1	1	2
	Totals	16	14	30
Improvers	Regular Teacher	35*	15	50
	Comp. Ed. Teacher	6	5	11
	Paraprofessional	12	3	15
	Principal	6	0	6
	Totals	59	23	82

Case Descriptions of the Schools

In the following section some of the characteristics prevalent in each of the eight schools are presented. The reported characteristics were synthesized from the responses given in the interviews, the independent descriptions provided by the readers, and observations made by the field researchers during the debriefing sessions.

A Look at the Decliners

The data from the declining schools revealed a remarkable similarity between schools. Nevertheless, the reader should not be tempted to conclude that all declining schools are like these ones. Since these two schools were not selected at random, they may be neither representative nor typical of all decliners. The observations should be interpreted as suggestive rather than conclusive.

Both declining schools have evidenced better achievement in math than in reading over the past three years and both have evidenced more decline in math than in reading as reflected by the proportion of students in the upper quartile. Although there has been a significant decline in the upper quartile and an increase in the proportion of students in the lower quartile, both school staffs tend to either deny there has been any actual decline or attribute the decline to an atypical fourth grade.

School A: This school is located in a small village, a part of a much larger consolidated school district, consisting of a series of small towns and adjacent rural areas.

Over the past three years, the percentage of students mastering 75% or more of the objectives in math has declined from 85% to 64%, and the percentage who have mastered less than 25% has increased from 0 to almost 6%. In reading, the proportion of students mastering 75% or more has declined from 51% to 44%. The proportion who have mastered less than 25% of the reading objectives has increased from 15% to more than 39%. The field workers sent to the school were aware that it was a declining school before their visit and their impressions were affected by that knowledge. They did not, however, inform the staff of that fact. The readers of the protocols identified the school as a declining, or at least a low achieving school.

The senior researcher visited this school to make the arrangements concerning the field work. Initially, there had been some staff reluctance to the interview portion of the research. This visit, and the subsequent experience of the field workers, indicated that the principal was very much "public relations" oriented and made a strong effort to project a favorable image of the school. He considered it a very good school with a very good staff. He praised the cooperativeness and the quality of the staff. Although the teachers seemed to get along well with the principal, they did not indicate that he provided educational leadership. He spends time outside school in community relations with other groups. The principal provides no significant supervision and plays a minor role in directing instructional activities. The teachers, therefore, tend to "run their own show" and do pretty much what they want to do in the classroom. Although the superintendent was quite aware of the school's declining achievement, there is no indication that the principal was sensitive to it. At first contact, he denied that achievement was declining; in fact, he first suggested that the school had been improving on other tests. The central office subsequently indicated there was no evidence to support his claim.

There was evidence that at least some of the teachers devoted much time to activities that were not directly related to reading and math instruction. The students were engaged in many other activities such as rock collection. This reflected the principal's belief that students should have varied experiences and his feeling that teachers should be rewarded for activities of this sort.

As one looks for conditions in the school that may explain the declining achievement, several things stand out in the interviews and observations. First of all, there is an almost universal belief on the part of the principal and staff that the children are unable to do well in school. Repeatedly the interviewers were told that the children have changed, that they are now lower achievers, that the parents and the children are to blame for this, and there is "nothing the school can do about it". The students were perceived as non-college bound and the staff saw little point in trying to give them an academic background. Rather they should be given a range of experiences and helped to adjust to their future stations in life. The principal and staff emphasize the importance of a wide variety of activities (e.g., field trips). The principal reported that the teachers should reward the children for many other types of behavior, and not place a high priority on achievement in math and reading. The remedial math program which may have been responsible for the relatively high level of math achievement had been dropped for lack of funds. Achievement in the basic skills was obviously not a high priority item.

Associated with low priority of basic skills is the absence of clearly identified objectives or goals in the academic subjects. The teachers reported that they had identified a set of goals some time ago, but they don't know what ever happened to them. Teachers indicated that it was too frustrating to ask children to achieve normal grade levels, so such goals were not considered appropriate. The teachers are told they are doing a good job and the principal does not emphasize achievement in reading and math.

The lack of clearly identified objectives in the basic subjects is reflected in the fact that no attention has been paid to the assessment program in the last three years. Neither the second- nor third-grade teachers have the test results nor have they discussed the assessment program. There was much criticism of the MEAP test. At least one person indicated that the test was not at all valid for the type of children in the school; the concept of assessment was completely rejected. The principal expressed this by saying use of the assessment tests had a negative effect on the teachers. It made them feel as if they were not doing their job. Without specified reading and math objectives, it is difficult to evaluate teachers' effectiveness in this area. It is apparent the principal made no effort to evaluate their work and reports that "the weakest teacher is good enough."

All of this reflects the fact that the expectations for the students are generally low throughout the school. With a low level of expectations and no specific basic achievement goals, there is no reason for feeling any responsibility for doing a better job.

We can briefly summarize the characteristics of this school as follows: (1) there are no achievement goals set and there is no evaluation of the level of mastery in math and reading, (2) there is a general rejection of any accountability for student achievement, (3) the level of achievement is determined by non-school factors associated with the children, their parents, and the home environment; the teachers, thus, have very low expectations and they assume no responsibility for successful teaching of math and reading.

School B: School B is located in the central portion of a relatively small city in southern Michigan. About 15% to 20% of the student body is minority (black or Spanish-speaking). A somewhat larger proportion is from lower socio-economic status families.

The achievement patterns are very much like those of declining School A. The proportion of students who mastered 75% or more of the math objectives has declined from 73% to 50% from 1974-76. The proportion in the lower quartile has increased from 4½% to approximately 11%. The proportion mastering 75% or more of the reading objectives has declined from 31% to 26% in the same period of time, while the proportion mastering less than 25% has increased from 37.8% to 47.8% from 1974-76. Thus, the patterns of achievement are similar to those of the previous school in that mathematics achievement is somewhat higher than reading. School B achievement in both reading and math is slightly lower than in School A. The field researchers in School B had not been fully informed concerning the nature of the school's achievement pattern and they believed the school was improving rather than declining. The independent readers felt that this school was doing quite well under the circumstances, and both groups thought the school was improving. All sources of information indicate that there were good relationships among the staff. The teachers were pleased with the principal and, in turn, the principal was also very pleased with the teaching staff. In general, staff morale was good and the staff thought student morale was also good.

This school has tried a variety of different materials including the IGE individualized instructional program, the Wisconsin curriculum program, and the Alpha program emphasizing self-concept development. These programs were all viewed as desirable developments. As a matter of fact, one reader was so impressed by the development of the IGE program that he considered it as a primary cause of the "significant improvement" he believed was occurring in the school.

The responses concerning gains or losses in achievement were somewhat mixed. Some staff members thought that they had been gaining; others thought achievement had declined. There was no concern expressed about this in any quarter, however. Some indicated that the assessment tests were not valid and did not measure what the students should be achieving. Some teachers felt that the tests gave some impetus to working more with the higher achievers, but had no concern for bringing all students to a minimum mastery level. The principal expressed the opinion that it was "unrealistic to expect 80% mastery by these kids." If anyone expressed a concern about the level of achievement, it was rationalized by blaming the parents or the invalid state tests. Since the staff was so positive about their situation, one has to look beyond the statements for possible explanations of the declining achievement. The following are suggested by our observations as possible explanations.

The extensive experimenation with different kinds of reading materials and the constant changes to reading materials which emphasize differentiated programming for individual children may be relevant. It was clear that this differentiation was seen as the way to help some of the higher achievers. At the same time it seemed to provide the justification for not working very hard to bring up the lower achievers.

A second characteristic of this school which may be related to the declining achievement is the low level of expectations. The staff indicated there had been no great change in expectations, but it was clear from the principal's comment that "80% mastery was unrealistic" and other comments concerning unrealistic expectations, that staff expectations were not high. Staff also felt they should not frustrate the children by asking them to achieve too much. The level of academic expectations was clearly quite low and may actually have been declining.

Not one respondent mentioned any type of evaluation of the quality of instruction in math or reading. There was no indication that the principal, or anyone else, evaluated the teachers in any manner except to praise them. The assessment results seem to have been reviewed very casually, but some teachers indicated that there was no review of assessment results and only a few teachers indicated that they used the results in any way. Those who mentioned them emphasized working with the higher achieving students or criticized the tests. There seems to be no concern with results of the tests or any value in using the tests to evaluate the quality of the school's instructional program.

There was no indication that the assessment program or any other method was used to identify the basic achievement goals or objectives of the school program. A generally congenial environment, rather than specific types of achievement, was apparently the primary objective for this school.

The over-riding impression one gets from the protocols and observations is that of a very complacent staff who are very happy in their situation. They think they are doing a fine job and have no concern about doing any better. To expect any more from the students would be quite inappropriate. This would only frustrate the students who are now quite happy. When seen in this light, the decline in achievement is not surprising. It should be recognized, however, that the achievement in math, at least, is still relatively good, and the teachers could point to this as evidence that they are doing as well as should be expected.

The high level of morale, pleasant interpersonal relations, the comfortable relations with parents, and the changes in curriculum materials seem to deceive the observers of this school. The pleasant and innovative school situation is not improving the basic achievement.

In both declining schools there was a general satisfaction with, and complacency toward, the job being done. This general attitude was associated with the belief that the school is doing all that can and be done for its students. The staff in both schools generally accept the situation as it is. They tend to displace the responsibility for any failure onto the parents of the children and reject the concept of accountability and assessment. There is no commitment to do the job in teaching math and reading and the idea that the schools are in any way responsible for this task is rejected.

The Improving Schools

The six schools that have demonstrated substantial reading and math achievement gains in the past three years appear more heterogeneous than the two declining schools. This may simply be the result of the larger number of improvers, but may also indicate that there are alternative ways to realize improvement in reading and math achievement. The reader is reminded that the improving schools are not a random sample of all improving schools and the observations should not be generalized. The characteristics of the improving schools suggest some significant patterns which might be applicable in other schools. Our observations of these schools are arranged in order of the magnitude of improvement over the past three years beginning with the school which showed the least improvement in achievement.

School C: This school is located in a middle-class section of a rather large city and the student body is composed of about 75% middle-class students and a significant number of minority students. The latter are bussed to the school. The school has been a reasonably high achieving school, but has increased the level of achievement as a number of minority students were bussed to the school during the past three or four years. The proportion of students mastering 75% or more of the reading objectives has increased from 53% to 76% and mathematics from 80% to 97%.

The readers of the protocols made no mistake about this being a high achieving and improving school.

The school is organized in what is known as "pods" and the teachers in each "pod" work as a team. The observations indicated that within these "pods", a fairly traditional kind of classroom group meets with a given teacher at a particular time. There is some individualized instruction, but this observer's impression is that the emphasis on the "pods" and team teaching tends to exaggerate the importance of individualized instruction.

The principal is clearly an educational leader who takes great pride in having a superior school and this pride is also present among the teachers. There is a very good relationship between the teachers and the principal. In this school there has been and is a great emphasis upon specifying objectives, both the state level objectives and objectives identified by the local school district. The local district objective reference tests are used to check on student performance on these objectives. While other activities occur in the school, these activities all emphasize the importance of the basic skills. It is clear that academic achievement is the primary goal. The principal, teachers,and everybody concerned have very high expectations that the objectives can and will be achieved. These expectations apply to the minority group students as well as the middle-class students. The minority students seem to be integrated into the social system. The minimum goals apply to the total classroom group without regard to race or socio-economic status. Morale of both the students and the staff is very high; both take great pride in their accomplishments.

In summary, there is a very clear identification of specific goals and objectives as identified by both the state and the local school district. The goals are stressed in each classroom and student progress is regularly monitored to be sure that they are being achieved. The principal, teachers, and everyone concerned with the school have high expectations that are applied to all students. The staff assumes responsibility for achieving the objectives. They seem to make no distinction between the level of expectations and goals for the minority and non-minority students. This school exhibits high morale, high levels of educational leadership, and a great deal of pride in the job being done.

School D: School D is a predominantly black school in a middle-sized Michigan city. The school, though improving, has been and is a low achieving school; 94% of the students mastered less than 75% of the reading objectives, and 78% mastered less than 75% of the math objectives in 1974. Although there has been significant improvement, the level of achievement is still relatively low. The percentage mastering 75% or more of the objectives in reading has increased to 12% and the percentage mastering less than 25% in reading has declined from 70% to 56%. The proportion mastering 75% or more of the objectives in math has increased from 21% to 32%, and the lowest quartile has declined from 22% to 4%.

This school has changed principals. A black principal, who had taken the place of an older principal in 1974, was replaced in the fall of 1976 by a white principal. There has apparently been some friction, or at least. lack of congenial relations between black and white teachers. The black teachers' perception of the older principal had something to do with his leaving in 1974. The white teachers, apparently, were somewhat frustrated with the black principal in the few years that he served from 1974-76. At least one of the opinion leaders is an older black teacher;

she and the other black teachers generally express the belief that the predominantly black student body can achieve well. They are committed to doing what they can to bring this about. The readers of the protocols recognized that this was a low achieving school and tended to characterize it as a declining school. This may result from the low level of satisfaction and the indication that the teachers operate pretty much individually in planning and carrying out their programs. An apparent lack of communication and social interaction among the teachers was evident in our observations.

A careful examination of the staff responses in the interviews and observations suggest some factors which may explain the improvement in School D. First, there is a high level of awareness of the assessment test scores and they are used in the evaluation of the school and staff. The black teachers have emphasized the objectives identified in the assessment tests. The principal and some teachers, particularly the black teachers, one of whom has exerted considerable leadership in the school, have emphasized basic academic objectives and evaluation of the school in terms of the achievement of these objectives.

There is considerable emphasis upon expectations for student achievement. Previous principals were reported to have set high goals and expectations, although they may not have carried through in achieving them. The present principal also has high expectations and anticipates greater improvement. Many of the teachers, but not all, also hold high expectations. This is particularly true of the black teachers, who seem to have a greater determination and higher expectations for the students than the white teachers do. Most report that the level of expectations has improved over the last three or four years.

Associated with the level of expectations and the emphasis upon academic goals is the teachers' belief that the students can learn. This is particularly true of the black teachers who have a great pride in what they are doing and are committed to the improvement of student achievement. There is no indication that the school should not assume responsiblity for teaching of basic skills nor is the victim generally blamed for failure.

School E: This school has about 20% minority students and is in a middle-sized Michigan city. There are approximately 40% low income students. The percentage of students mastering 75% or more of the objectives in reading has increased from 25% to 38% and the math objectives from 39% to 62%. There also has been a significant decline in the proportion of students in the lower quartile in both subject matter areas. The responses to our interview and the observations of the school are somewhat less revealing and satisfying than in the other schools. This is probably the result of the fact that there was a new principal during the current year who replaced a principal who had been in the school for many years. Much of the comment concerning the school focuses on the new principal who is making many changes, but his appointment does not explain the changes in achievement which occurred before his arrival in the fall of 1976. The staff apparently is unaware of the fact that there had been a significant improvement in the reading and math achievement; there had been little or no use of the assessment test data in the school. Only one first-grade teacher indicated making use of the assessment results. It is apparent that she was talking about some other test, rather than the Michigan assessment data. Only one person indicated that the principal, or anyone else, had ever mentioned the MEAP test results at a faculty meeting.

The staff was aware of the state's emphasis upon accountability and several teachers indicated that this made the staff assume more responsibility. They also indicated that the central district office has put more stress on reading and math objectives and emphasized their importance. This is associated with a feeling that the central administration expects higher achievement in the basics and also that the parents expect more in these areas than they formerly did.

Perhaps the most relevant observation is that made by one of our field workers. The third-grade teacher reported that she had taken responsibility for seeing that the children learn. She believes that they can do well in basic reading and math achievement. The former principal let each teacher run his or her own affairs, and this third-grade teacher committed herself a few years ago to student mastery of the basic reading and math objectives.

It will be interesting to observe whether the new principal, who attracted so much comment in our interviews, succeeds in increasing the rate of improvement.

School F: This is an all-black school with an all-black staff, except for one part-time teacher. It became all black about 10 years ago. It is in a suburban city in the Detroit metropolitan area. The proportion of students mastering 75% or more of the objectives in reading has increased from 14.5% to 29%, and in math from 31% to 51%. There has been a comparable decline in the proportion of students passing less than 25% of the objectives. The staff did not know very much about the assessment data. Some thought they had improved, and others thought they had not. All seemed to be concerned about upgrading the achievement level.

There was a clear indication that they have had inadequate funds for supplies and materials, and teachers have supplemented the available materials on their own.

There seemed to be agreement on the mastery of basic goals and objectives. There has been no great change in this, but there has been greater attention given to the objectives measured by the assessment tests in the faculty meetings. The staff reports that the parents now have somewhat higher expectations than formerly and that parents have been participating more in the last few years. The parents have good relations with the teachers. In this respect, there has been significant change. The parents' higher expectations are matched by the teachers' and administrators' increased expectations for students. The increasing level of expectations is associated with the belief that all students can achieve and it's possible for the school to do the job. There is no indication that they blame the parents or the children for their failures.

Perhaps the most important observation of this school is that the teachers are dedicated to do the job in spite of the handicaps which they have due to a lack of materials and facilities. As one reader indicated, they are determined to "give it a good go." They appear to be intent on the education of their students, expecting them to succeed and to conduct themselves with appropriate self-discipline. They do not feel they are assisted in this effort very much, but the staff, nevertheless, is dedicated to overcoming the obstacles.

The principal seems to have good relationships with the teachers and they report that he performs well. They recognize that it is his job to evaluate their performance. The morale of the staff seems to be high.

School G: This school is located on the outer edge of a middle-sized city. Part of the school district is made up of a number of smaller towns and rural residential areas in the metropolitan southeastern portion of Michigan. The staff reported an increase in the level of minority and poorer students, although the state data indicates that a level of 30% or so minority students has been stable over the last few years. Some black teachers have recently been added to the staff and the black children have become better integrated into the school programs. Reports indicate that the black students have a greater sense of control over their situation than formerly; less racism is being expressed now than before. The readers of the interview protocols think the school is declining rather than improving. Relationships among staff seem to be quite satisfactory. The teachers filed a grievance against the principal some years ago because of his lack of discipline, but this resulted in much stricter discipline and there seems to be generally good morale in spite of some cutbacks in funds and the absence of a teachers' contract.

There is a clear recognition and identification of the state objectives in reading and mathematics. These objectives are stressed by the principal and the teachers and they are identified as minimum achievement standards. The assessment test objectives and results are discussed at faculty meetings and the teachers frequently discuss and work on the assessment objectives. There is evidence that the principal and the second- , third-, and fourth-grade teachers have increased their expectations and now hold quite high reading and math expectations for their students.

Although all the teachers were very concerned and conscientious in trying to do a good job, the reports indicated that the second- and third-grade teachers particularly emphasize achievement of the basic skills and emphasize re-teaching until the assessment objectives are achieved. They used dittoed assessment questions to evaluate the third-graders' mastery of the objectives. In addition to high expectations, they believe the students can master the objectives and are committed to their mastery of the skills.

In summary, the primary sources of changes in achievement are probably found in the integration of the black students into the student body with the addition of some black teachers, a strong emphasis upon the state objectives, use of assessment tests to check on the achievement of these objectives, an increase in the level of expectations (particularly on the part of second- and third-grade teachers), and the commitment on the part of these, as well as other teachers, to getting the job done. The teachers assume that the students can learn and they assume responsibility for teaching them. There is little blame placed upon the parents of the students for any failure.

In spite of the perception that the student body has declined in ability, the level of achievement in both reading and math has increased significantly. The proportion of students mastering 75% or more of the objectives has increased from 27% to 53%, and in three years the proportion mastering the same percentage of math objectives has increased from 41% to 80%. The school has clearly moved from relatively low achievement to reasonably high achievement even though the readers of our protocols seem to think that it is declining.

School H: This school is located in the inner-city of Detroit and is almost 100% black. It has a white principal who was reported to have tight control of the school. Our observers in the field all report that teachers are working together and they are trying hard to give students self-confidence. The readers of the protocols identify this as an improving school and tend to give credit to the regional office. The people who visited the school, however, give much more credit to the principal and the staff.

Although this school is still functioning on a relatively low level of achievement, there has been a significant achievement increase over the past three years. The proportion of students achieving 75% or more of the objectives in reading has increased from less than 5% to 24%, and in math from less than 4% to 43%. The proportion in the lowest quartile changed even more dramatically. It dropped from 74% to 35% in reading and from 52% to 10% in math.

It is clear from our reports that School H has designed a MEAP "plan of action" to bring about changes in achievement. This involves a complete acceptance and identification of the reading and math objectives of the Michigan assessment program and weekly emphasis on the achievement of a given objective. Regular Wednesday faculty meetings devote attention the the specific objectives and teachers' positive reinforcement of students mastering the objectives. They reward mastery with a gold star and punish the students who have not achieved the objectives by loss of physical education activities. Each week a particular classroom is identified as having evidenced the highest achievement on the objectives for the week. A banner is placed outside that classroom for the following week. The principal checks on all teachers through weekly post-tests and the results are distributed throughout the school. The school returned to self-contained classrooms a few years ago, and the teacher in each room is held responsible for what students in that room achieve.

There is no indication of great changes in the level of expectations, although some teachers indicate that expectations have increased as teachers have become aware of the improved achievement.

In summary, there is a general acceptance of the objectives defined by the state assessment tests and the identification of objectives to be achieved on a weekly basis. There is considerable classroom competition for achievement of the objectives and teachers are held accountable for improved achievement. Both the teachers and principal assume responsibility for math and reading achievement and assume that the students can learn these skills.

Common Characteristics of the Improvers

Although there is substantial variation between the six schools that made significant gains in achievement, there are some relatively common characteristics. Very little can be said about the common organizational characteristics. They vary from very traditional self-contained classrooms to somewhat open "pod" organization with team teaching. Various types of both homogeneous and heterogeneous grouping of students are used and various degrees of emphasis are placed on individualized instruction. There is also a wide variety of educational materials and methods used.

In some of these schools, there seems to be considerable internal conflict and tension; in others, close interpersonal relationships and a high level of cooperation are apparent. Some people declare the principal is clearly an educational leader who has great impact on the school program, and others seem to think the principal is only an administrative or public relations person.

The common characteristics, however, are generally identified in the descriptions of the six schools. Several of these stand out as significant.

The figure indicates the presence of several characteristics in the improving schools. In all six schools, basic reading and math skills are identified as primary objectives and goals. This contrasts sharply with the attitude in the declining schools which we described earlier.

In five of the six schools, there is evidence of a high, and rising, level of expectations for the students. In the one school where that evidence is not clear, it may be reflected in the very intensive use of assessment objectives and the demand that these objectives be mastered. In that school there is weekly competition between classrooms on the objectives identified by the Michigan assessment program. This indirectly suggests that the students are expected to master at least these minimum objectives.

In four of the six schools, there is considerable discussion of an emphasis on the use of the MEAP tests as a basis for evaluation and the identification of the objectives to be achieved.

In four of the six schools, (but not the same four that emphasize the MEAP tests), there is particular emphasis upon evaluation and accountability. This takes somewhat different forms in the various schools, but there is recognition that the school's performance should be evaluated and that some system of accountability should be adhered to.

In all of the six schools, there is at least some indication of the commitment to get the job done and a belief that it can be done. In five of the six schools, this is characteristic of the staff in general while in the sixth school at least a few of the teachers assume responsibility for mastery of basic skills.

In all six schools, at least some of the staff believe that the students are able to learn the basic skills. In five of the six schools,

	Reading & Math Basic Goals	Use of MEAP Tests	High and Increasing Expectations	Evaluates Achievement of Objectives	Staff Accepts Responsibility for Achievement & is Committed To Doing So	Staff Believes Students Can Master Objectives
C	XX	X	X	X	X	X
D	X	X	X		X	X
E	X		X	X	1 or 2	1 or 2
F	X		X	X	X	X
G	X	X	X		X	X
H	X	XX		X	X	X

Figure: Characteristics of Improvers

this is a general characteristic of the staff, but in the sixth school only one or two teachers, particularly in the third-grade, believe their students can learn, and they have assumed responsibility for seeing that they do. In this school much of the improvement may be attributed to the one or two third-grade teachers. In one other school there seems to be a similar commitment on the part of three or four teachers, even if it is not universally accepted.

In these improving schools it is clear there is a recognition of the basic skills as primary objectives and an expectation that the students will achieve these goals; the teachers are committed and dedicated to accomplishing this task and believe it can be done. They assume responsibility for the mastery of the objectives rather than placing the blame on the parents or the state and concluding that the school can do little or nothing about achieving a mastery of the basic skills. This is in contrast to the declining schools where it is considered unrealistic, if not inappropriate, to set mastery of these objectives as a goal for the school and the teachers feel no responsibility for achieving those ends.

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The following summary enumerates the factors which differentiate between improving and declining schools. The concluding section includes a number of recommendations which flow from these findings. The recommendations are drawn from the findings of this study as well as other related research.

Summary of Differences Between Improving and Declining Schools

(1) The improving schools are clearly different from the declining schools in the emphasis their staff places on the accomplishment of the basic reading and mathematics objectives. The improving schools accept and emphasize the importance of these goals and objectives, while the declining schools give much less emphasis to such objectives and certainly do not specify them as fundamental goals of their program.

(2) There is a clear contrast in the evaluations that teachers and principals make of the students in the improving and declining schools. The staffs of the improving schools tend to believe that *all* of their students can master the basic objectives and, furthermore, the teachers perceive that the principal shares this belief. They tend to report higher and increasing levels of student ability, while the declining school teachers project the belief that students' ability levels are low and, therefore, they cannot master even these objectives.

(3) The staff of the improving schools hold decidedly higher and apparently increasing levels of expectations with regard to the educational accomplishments of their students. In contrast, staff of the declining schools are much less likely to believe that their students will complete high school or college.

(4) In contrast to the declining schools, the teachers and principals of the improving schools are much more likely to assume responsibility for teaching the basic reading and math skills and are much more committed to doing so. The staffs of the declining schools feel that there is not much that teachers can do to influence the achievement of their students. They tend to displace the responsibility for skill learning on the parents or the students themselves.

(5) Since the teachers in the declining schools believe that there is little they can do to influence basic skill learning, it follows that they spend less time in direct reading instruction than do teachers in the improving schools. With the greater emphasis on reading and math objectives in the improving schools, the staffs in these schools devote a much greater amount of time toward achieving reading and math objectives.

(6) There seems to be a clear difference in the principal's role in the improving and declining schools. In the improving schools, the principal is more likely to be an instructional leader, more likely to be assertive in his instructional leadership role, is more of a disciplinarian and, perhaps most of all, assumes responsibility for the evaluation of the achievement of basic objectives. The principals in the declining schools appear to be more permissive and to emphasize informal and collegial relationships with the teachers. They put more emphasis on general public relations and less emphasis upon evaluation of the school's effectiveness in providing a basic education for students.

(7) The improving school staffs appear to evidence a greater degree of acceptance of the concept of accountability and are further along in the development of an accountability model. Certainly they accept the MEAP tests as one indication of their effectiveness to a much greater degree than the declining school staffs. The latter tend to reject the relevance of the MEAP tests and make little use of these assessment devices as a reflection of their instruction.

(8) Generally, teachers in the improving schools are less satisfied than teachers in the declining schools. The higher levels of reported staff satisfaction and morale in the declining schools seem

to reflect a pattern of complacency and satisfaction with the current levels of educational attainment. On the other hand, the improving school staffs appeared more likely to experience some tension and dissatisfaction with the existing situation.

(9) Differences in the level of parent involvement in the improving and declining schools are not clear cut. It seems that there is less overall parent involvement in the improving schools; however, the improving school staffs indicated that their schools have higher levels of *parent-initiated* involvement. This suggests that we need to look more closely at the nature of the involvement exercised by parents. Perhaps parent initiated contact with the schools represents an effective instrument of educational change.

(10) The compensatory education program data suggest differences between improving and declining schools, but these differences may be distorted by the fact that one of the declining schools had just initiated a compensatory education program. In general, the improving schools are not characterized by a high emphasis upon paraprofessional staff, nor heavy involvement of the regular teachers in the selection of students to be placed in compensatory education programs. The declining schools seem to have a greater number of different staff involved in reading instruction and more teacher involvement in identifying students who are to be placed in compensatory education programs. The regular classroom teachers in the declining schools report spending more time planning for non-compensatory education reading activities. The decliners also report greater emphasis on programmed instruction.

Although differences between these improving and declining schools have been identified, it should be reiterated that these schools were not randomly selected. The differences between these schools may not be representative of the total populations of improving or declining schools.

Recommendations

The research staff offers the following recommendations to the educational community for their consideration. It should be recognized that the recommendations derive primarily from the data collected as part of this study and secondarily from related research studies.

(1) The information from this study and other relevant studies which indicate the differences between higher achieving or improving schools and lower achieving or declining schools should be widely disseminated to the schools. A professional staff could re-orient their efforts based on this information.

(2) The Michigan Department of Education and school district administrators should stress the fact that achievement of minimal goals and objectives in reading and math is a "non-negotiable" educational goal. Unless the school staff accepts the mastery of basic objectives as a fundamental goal, they are not likely to move toward or experience educational improvement.

(3) Educational leaders should reduce the emphasis on differential goals and objectives for students and increase the emphasis on the mastery of basic skills by all students. Such an emphasis would focus more attention on the mastery of basic objectives by the group as a whole and reduce the current emphasis on differentiated instructional programs which may not achieve such objectives.

(4) A program should be undertaken to emphasize common academic expectations for all students. Over the past decades much attention has been devoted to identifying students who are not expected to succeed

educationally. Attention should now be turned toward increasing our educational expectations for such students so that common minimal levels of objectives may be achieved by all students.

(5) The Michigan Department of Education and district level administrators should emphasize the principal's role as that of director of instruction and evaluator of the school's instructional program. A program of professional improvement for principals which would emphasize their accountability for the improvement of instruction in their building is essential.

(6) The Michigan Department of Education should continue to emphasize accountability of principals and teachers and promote the use of the MEAP tests as one device for holding schools accountable for minimum basic objectives. This might be facilitated by giving public recognition to those that have made significant improvement and by providing public information about schools that have not improved their achievement.

(7) Any general program of professional development must emphasize the educator's professional responsiblity for the basic instruction of all students. Teachers who are prone to excuse their failures by displacing the blame on parents and children are not likely to maximize or even impact on the achievement of their students.

(8) The compensatory education program should be re-oriented in such a way that regular teachers remain responsible for the achievement of the basic goals. Currently, it appears that there is a tendency to diffuse responsibility for instruction of compensatory education students through a variety of pull-out programs. When staff assistance is provided for such students, it should be done in such a way that classroom teachers continue to assume their responsibility for achieving the basic objectives.

(9) The Michigan Department of Education and administrators would do well to develop a monitoring procedure which examines the actual amount of time spent in direct instructional activities related to the mastery of the basic objectives. Time spent on direct instructional tasks is clearly important.

(10) The definition of the "teaching task" and the basis for satisfaction in the teaching role needs re-examination. Teaching is a "production-oriented" job designed to accomplish defined goals. The degree to which these "production goals" are realized ought to be the basis for teacher satisfaction. Clearly, the improving school staffs evidence a higher degree of internalization for this production orientation, and they, and others like them, ought to be recognized and rewarded for their accomplishments.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Responses Given by a Higher Than Expected Percentage of Respondents from Improving Schools

1. Over the past three years, has the number of discussions you have had per year with a reading teacher or consultant about your students' reading activities

decreased
remained the same
*increased

2. Over the past three years, has the amount of time you spend in direct instructional contact with students

decreased
remained the same
*increased

3. Indicate the degree to which you rely on each of the following approaches to reading instruction with your compensatory education students using the 1-5 scale below:

1 - I am not familiar with it
2 - I am familiar with it but don't use it
3 - I rely on it occasionally
4 - I rely on it frequently
5 - I rely on it heavily, perhaps daily

	Approach	Degree Relied Upon
*A)	Basal Text	4
B)	Programmed Instruction (e.g., Sullivan, BRL)	___
C)	Language experience (e.g., students reading their own written material)	___

4. Since the beginning of this current school year, how has your time during regular working hours but not in contact with students (i.e., prior to the beginning of the students' school year, during workshops or in-service sessions, before students arrive each day, and after they leave each day) been divided among the following activities?.

Activity	% of Work Time Not in Contact with Students
A) Planning for comp. ed. reading activities	___
B) Planning for other reading activities	___

---

*Responses given by higher than expected percentage of respondents.

*C) Planning for all other instructional activities 10% or less

D) Receiving training for comp. ed. reading activities ______

E) Receiving training for other reading activities ______

F) Receiving training for all other instructional activities ______

G) Participating in decisions related to comp. ed. reading activities (e.g., selecting materials or tests, determining who is to conduct training, determining performance objectives, determining evaluation designs) ______

H) Participating in decisions related to other reading activities ______

I) Participating in decisions related to all other instructional activities ______

J) Administrative or record keeping activities ______

K) All other activities (please specify): ______

100%

5. Considering all the reading instruction provided your compensatory education students from all sources within your school, besides yourself, how many of each of the following staff members at your school are directly involved in providing this instruction?

Staff Member	No. Besides Yourself Involved In Reading Instruction for Your Compensatory Education Students
*A) Regular classroom teachers	1
B) Special compensatory education reading teachers	
C) Paraprofessionals	

APPENDIX B

Responses Given by a Higher Than Expected Percentage of Respondents from Declining Schools

1. Over the past three years, has teacher morale in your school

   declined
   remained the same
   *increased

*2. Approximately how many of these discussions were initiated by the reading teacher or consultant?

   3-5 discussions

3. Over the past three years, has the amount of time you spend on the following activities decreased, remained the same, or increased? (Please circle the number corresponding to your answer for each activity listed.)

   A) Planning for Reading Activities

   decreased
   remained the same
   increased

   B) Planning for all other Instructional Activities

   decreased
   remained the same
   increased

   C) Receiving Training for Reading Activities

   decreased
   remained the same
   increased

   D) Receiving Training for all other Instructional Activities

   decreased
   remained the same
   increased

   E) Participating in Decisions Related to Reading Activities (e.g., selecting materials and/or tests, determining who is to conduct training, determining performance objectives, determining evaluation designs)

   decreased
   remained the same
   increased

---

*Responses given by higher than expected percentage of respondents.

*F) Participating in Decisions Related to all Other Instructional Activities

decreased
remained the same
increased

G) Administrative or Record-Keeping Activities

decreased
remained the same
increased

4. Given the six-stage definition of accountability supported by the Michigan State Board of Education (and listed briefly below), please circle the number of each stage which you personally feel your school has already implemented.

*A) Identify Goals
B) Develop Performance Objectives
C) Conduct Needs Assessment
D) Analyze Delivery Systems
*E) Test and Evaluate
F) Recommend for Improvement

5. Which of the stages you identified have been implemented for the first time during the past three years? (Circle the number of all implemented in this period.)

A) Identify Goals
B) Develop Performance Objectives
*C) Conduct Needs Assessment
D) Analyze Delivery Systems
E) Test and Evaluate
F) Recommend for Improvement

6. Do you feel that implementation of the accountability model in your school has had an impact on your class?

*NO
YES

Please explain: 1) Impact on what materials are used; 2) Not really. We had been doing some work in the areas of reading and language, such as setting up goals, evaluating what we had been doing, finding out our areas of weakness and seeking programs to meet our needs; 3) I don't worry about accountability, just about satisfying goals and objectives I'm personally committed to.

7. Over the past three years, has your satisfaction with the relationships you have with parents of your students

decreased
remained the same
*increased

8. Over the past three years, has your degree of satisfaction with the professional relationships among teachers in your school

decreased
remained the same
*increased

9. How frequently do parents initiate individual contacts concerning a student's progress?

almost never
*seldom
occasionally
frequently
very often

10. Has the number of students you expect to complete college

*decreased
remained the same
increased

11. How many teachers in this school feel that all of their students should be taught to read well and master other academic subjects?

none
few
some
*most
all

12. Do you agree that in this school there is very little a teacher can do to insure that all of her/his students achieve at a high level?

I very strongly disagree
I strongly disagree
*I somewhat agree
I strongly agree
I very strongly agree

13. Do students in your class tease or make fun of those students who repeatedly make mistakes?

NO
*YES

14. Indicate the degree to which you rely on each of the following approaches to reading instruction with your compensatory education students using the 1-5 scale below:

1 - I am not familiar with it
2 - I am familiar with it but don't use it
3 - I rely on it occasionally
4 - I rely on it frequently
5 - I rely on it heavily, perhaps daily

Approach	Degree Relied Upon
A) Basal Text	____
B) Programmed Instruction (e.g., Sullivan, BRL)	____
*C) Language experience (e.g., students reading their own written material)	4

15. Who usually leads small group instruction in reading for your compensatory education students?

Not applicable
*The classroom teacher
A student
A paraprofessional
A reading teacher or consultant
Other
If other, please specify:

16. What is the average number of hours per week you spend on compensatory education reading activities outside of regular working hours?

*3-5 hours per week

17. Since the beginning of this current school year, how has your time during regular working hours but not in contact with students (i.e., prior to the beginning of the students' school year, during workshops or in-service sessions, before students arrive each day, and after they leave each day) been divided among the following activities?

Activity	% of Work Time Not in Contact with Student
A) Planning for comp. ed. reading activities	________
B) Planning for other reading activities	________

C) Planning for all other instructional activities ________

D) Receiving training for comp. ed. reading activities ________

E) Receiving training for other reading activities ________

F) Receiving training for all other instructional activities ________

G) Participating in decisions related to comp. ed. reading activities (e.g., selecting materials or tests, determining who is to conduct training, determining performance objectives, determining evaluation designs) ________

H) Participating in decisions related to other reading activities ________

I) Participating in decisions related to all other instructional activities ________

*J) Administrative or record keeping activities 6-10%

K) All other activities (please specify): ________

100%

18. Considering all the reading instruction provided your compensatory education students from all sources within your school, besides yourself, how many of each of the following staff members at your school are directly involved in providing this instruction?

Staff Member	No. Besides Yourself Involved In Reading Instruction for Your Compensatory Education Students
A) Regular classroom teachers	
*B) Special compensatory education reading teachers	2
C) Paraprofessionals	

APPENDIX C

Questions Showing Expected Percentages of Responses from Declining and Improving Schools

1. What is the highest degree you hold?

   None
   Associate
   Bachelors
   Masters
   Specialist
   Doctorate

2. Please indicate the term hours you have in various aspects of reading instruction listed:

   A) Materials and methods

3. Approximately how many discussions about reading instruction have you had with your principal this year?

   ____discussions

4. How many of these discussions were initiated by your principal?

   ____discussions

5. Over the past three years, has the number of discussions you have had per year with your principal about reading instruction

   decreased
   remained the same
   increased

6. Approximately how many times this year has a reading teacher or consultant discussed your students' reading activities with you?

7. What is the average number of hours per week you are in direct instructional contact with students in the following areas?

   A) Teaching Reading ____hours per week
   B) All Other Teaching Contact ____hours per week

8. Who usually leads small group instruction in reading for your students?

   Not applicable
   The classroom teacher
   A student
   A paraprofessional
   A reading teacher or consultant
   Other

   If other, please specify:

9. Has this changed over the past three years?

No
Yes

If yes, please explain:

10. Over the past three years, has the amount of time you spend on the following activities decreased, remained the same, or increased? (Please circle the number corresponding to your answer for each activity listed.)

A) Planning for Reading Activities

decreased
remained the same
increased

B) Planning for all other Instructional Activities

decreased
remained the same
increased

C) Receiving Training for Reading Activities

decreased
remained the same
increased

E) Participating in Decisions Related to Reading Activities (e.g., selecting materials and/or tests, determining who is to conduct training, determining performance objectives, determining evaluation designs)

decreased
remained the same
increased

11. Given the six-stage definition of accountability supported by the Michigan State Board of Education, please circle the number of each stage which you personally feel your school has already implemented.

B) Develop performance objectives
C) Conduct needs assessment
D) Analyze delivery systems

12. Which of the stages you identified have been implemented for the first time during the past three years?

D) Analyze delivery systems
E) Test and evaluate
F) Recommend for improvements

13. Generally, how satisfied are you with the relationships you have with parents of your students?

    extremely dissatisfied
    moderately dissatisfied
    somewhat satisfied
    moderately satisfied
    extremely satisfied

14. Which of the following best describes the degree of autonomy you have within your classroom?

    Everything must be as the principal says
    I have to do pretty much as the principal says
    Some limitations are imposed
    I usually can do as I please
    I can do as I please

15. Over the past three years, has your autonomy

    decreased
    remained the same
    increased

16. Other than scheduled parent-teacher contacts, how frequently do you initiate individual contacts with parents concerning a student's progress?

    almost never
    seldom
    occasionally
    frequently
    very often

17. Has the frequency with which you initiate contacts concerning students' progress

    decreased
    remained the same
    increased

18. Other than scheduled parent-teacher contacts, how frequently do you initiate individual contacts with parents concerning a student's social behavior?

    almost never
    seldom
    occasionally
    frequently
    very often

19. Over the past three years, has this

decreased
remained the same
increased

20. Has the frequency with which parents initiate contacts concerning a student's progress

decreased
remained the same
increased

21. Over the past three years, has the frequency with which parents initiate individual contacts concerning a student's social behavior

decreased
remained the same
increased

22. Do you allow your students to move freely within the classroom?

I never permit movement
I rarely permit movement
I occasionally permit movement (for specific projects, lessons, etc.)
I frequently permit movement
I always permit movement

23. Has the amount of movement you permit in your classroom

decreased
remained the same
increased

24. Has the number of students you expect to complete high school

decreased
remained the same
increased

25. How many of the parents of the students in this school expect their children to complete high school?

none
few
some
most
all

26. Over the past three years, has this number

decreased
remained the same
increased

27. Over the past three years, has the number of teachers who feel that all their students should be taught to read well and master other academic subjects

decreased
remained the same
increased

28. Has the number of teachers who feel that almost all of their students can be taught to master the basic skills

decreased
remained the same
increased

29. Over the past three years, have student requests for extra work

decreased
remained the same
increased

30. How many students in this school are content to do less than they should?

none
few
some
most
all

31. Over the past three years, has the number of students who are content to do less than they should

decreased
remained the same
increased

32. Do students in your class tease or make fun of those students who do well in their school work?

no
yes

33. Has this changed over the past three years?

no
yes

34. Do students in your class tease or make fun of those students who repeatedly make mistakes?
Has this changed over the past three years?

no
yes

What effect has this had on your students' academic progress?

35. How many students in this school feel that if they work hard they will be successful?

none
few
some
most
all

36. Over the past three years, has there been a change in the number of students who feel this way?

no
yes

37. Has the degree of your involvement in the determination of which students would be provided compensatory education assistance

decreased
remained the same
increased

38. To what extent have you used commercial reading texts, series, or programs this year as a basic part of your compensatory education reading activities?

basic ____
supplementary ____
not at all ____

39. Over the past three years, has your usage of this type of material

decreased
remained the same
increased

40. Indicate what percentage of your student contact time is spent during a typical day's compensatory education reading activities to introduce or discuss new topics or materials

____%

41. Has the person who usually leads small group instruction for your compensatory education students changed over the past three years?

no
yes

42. What percentage of the compensatory education students in your classroom do you realistically expect to complete high school?

____%

43. Over the past three years, has this percentage

decreased
remained the same
increased

44. What is the average number of hours per week you are in direct instructional contact teaching reading to compensatory education students?

____hours per week

45. Over the past three years has your direct instructional contact teaching reading to compensatory education students

decreased
remained the same
increased

46. Since the beginning of this current school year, how has your time during regular working hours but not in contact with students (i.e., prior to the beginning of the students' school year, during workshops or in-service sessions, before students arrive each day, and after they leave each day) been divided among the following activities?

Activity	% of Work Time Not in Contact with Student
A) Planning for comp. ed. reading activities	
D) Receiving training for comp. ed. reading activities	
E) Receiving training for other reading activities	
F) Receiving training for all other instructional activities	
G) Participating in decisions related to comp. ed. reading activities (e.g., selecting materials or tests, determining who is to conduct training, determining performance objectives, determining evaluation designs)	

H) Participating in decisions related to other reading activities

I) Participating in decisions related to all other instructional activities

K) All other activities (please specify):

47. Over the past three years has the number of students present in the classroom during the time in which you conducted compensatory education reading activities

decreased
remained the same
increased

APPENDIX D

Focused Interview Schedule for Teachers

Introduction: Dr. Brookover and Dr. Lezotte from Michigan State University are directing this study which is supported by the Michigan Department of Education. The purpose of this study is to try to determine how schools change. We have selected this school as one of several in the study. We hope that the information we get from you and the others at this school will help us to better understand the ways in which changes occur.

1. Name of School: ______
2. Name of Person Interviewed (optional): ______
3. Type of Position of Person Interviewed: ______
4. Interview Conducted by: ______
5. Date: ____ Start Time: ____ Ending Time: ____
6. How long have you been employed at your school? ______
7. What grade do you teach? ______
8. Have you always taught this grade? ______
9. How many students are there in your class? ______
10. Has you class size changed very much over the past three years? ______

Suppose there was a teacher in your school with whom you had worked and who had been away for the past three or four years. What would you tell that teacher to bring her/him up to date on what had happened in the school while she/he was away?

Are you aware of any changes in the students' achievement levels that have occurred over the past three years?

Yes.....1
No......2

If yes, please describe: ______

Do you use the State Assessment results in any way?

Yes.....1
No......2

If yes, how do you use them? ______

Does your principal or some other staff member review the State Assessment results with the entire faculty?

Yes.....1
No......2

If yes, please describe how this is done: ______

NOW I'M GOING TO ASK YOU A FEW MORE SPECIFIC QUESTIONS ABOUT CHANGES WHICH MAY HAVE OCCURRED IN YOUR SCHOOL. OVER THE PAST THREE OR FOUR YEARS, HAVE YOU NOTICED ANY CHANGES IN:

A. Student characteristics (effect on school? staff response? effect on own classroom? individual response?)

B. Parent and community attitudes and expectations (why changed? effect on school? staff response? effect on own classroom? individual response?)

C. Parent involvement (why changed? effect on school? staff response? effect on own classroom? individual response?)

D. Teacher-parent relationships (why changed? effect or school or classroom?)

E. Teacher or administrative expectations for students (why changed? effect on school or classroom?)

F. Goals and objectives (why changed? who initiated? effect on school or classroom?)

G. Instructional strategies [teaching methods] (why changed? who initiated? effect on school or classroom?)

H. Curricular materials (why changed? who initiated? effect on school or classroom?)

I. Classroom organization [grouping practices] (why changed? who initiated? effect on school or classroom?)

J. District level policies (effect on school? staff response? effect on own classroom? individual response?)

K. State level policies (effect on school? staff response? effect on own classroom? individual response?)

L. Special programs [federal, state, other--include Comp. Ed.] (effect on school? staff response? effect on own classroom? individual response?)

M. Student evaluation and reporting procedures (why changed? who initiated? effect on school or classroom?)

N. Student promotion policies (why changed? who initiated? effect on school or classroom?)

O. Approaches to discipline (why changed? who initiated? effect on school or classroom?)

P. Teacher-student relationships (why changed? effect on school or classroom?)

Q. Principal's role in school (why changed? effect on school or classroom?)

R. Principal-teacher relationships (why changed? effect on school or classroom?)

S. Evaluation of teachers and other staff (why changed? effect on school or classroom?)

T. Contractual agreements (effect on school or classroom?)

U. Teacher inputs in building level policies and practices (who initiated? effect on school or classroom?)

V. Teacher autonomy (who initiated? effect on school or classroom?)

W. Teacher-teacher relationships (why changed? effect on school or classroom?)

X. Teacher morale (why changed? effect on school or classroom?)

Y. Student morale (why changed? effect on school or classroom?)

Can you think of any other important changes in the school over the past three years?

APPENDIX E

Areas to be Addressed in Characterizing Schools

1. Describe the organization of the school. The description of "organization" should include, but not be limited to, size, arrangement of classrooms and grade levels, decision making patterns, communication patterns, etc.

2. Describe the important functions of the school as perceived and reported by those interviewed. A description of the functions should indicate:

   a. the extent to which the staff hold a common understanding of the priority areas of emphasis;

   b. the clarity with which people believe the functions of the school have been articulated.

3. How would you describe the most widely utilized educational and teaching methods and materials currently being deployed by the staff in this building. In addition, describe those policies and practices which are a characterstic of the school.

4. How would you describe the pattern and quality of the interpersonal relationships among the various professional staff members in the school.

5. Describe how the school's staff perceive the students and community being served by the school.

6. Describe how the school's staff feel about their effectiveness in meeting the educational needs of the students being served.

7. In reviewing the available information on this school, did you formulate an impression about this school, as well as the specific one, reflected in your six descriptions above? If "yes", please report your general impressions here.

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